

Simple Guidelines for Assigning Location Codes

Assigning location codes to one location, or one sample point at a particular location, enables the user to compile site-specific data to analyze either over the short or long-term. On the laboratory's end, it does increase login efficiencies, but I imagine the most effective way of utilizing location codes benefits the end user. A couple of things to keep in mind:

1. Code Consistency: If you are at 1 "site" but have 5 sampling points, you may create a separate code for each sampling point. Keep in mind, if you return to the site at a later time to collect more samples, it would be beneficial (for the above-noted reasons) to use the same location code originally established for the site.
2. No Variable Codes: Do not use collector's initials, dates, times, or any other information that may change to create a location code. A location code is a code that identifies a location, aka - a specific place; not who, when, how, or why....simply where. Date, time, and collector names are already input into LabWorks and, therefore, makes it unnecessary to reflect this information in the location code. Frequently used examples of non-variable codes include: street address, GPS code, acronyms, and various other combinations.
3. Special Characters: LabWorks will not accept "special characters" or spaces included in the location code. Also, no mixed case letters. Everything in LabWorks is to be entered as capital letters only. Special Characters are defined as the following: ! @ # \$ % ^ & * () + = / \ | < >
4. Code Length: A location code must be between 5 and 24 characters in length. Location codes may not be duplicated for multiple sites. It is imperative that location codes be, at a minimum, 5 characters in length, otherwise the samples might have to be entered under the default regional NLC. For example, if RRO is using A1, A2, A3, A4 as their location codes, not only is that not very descriptive, it's also possible that other collectors in other regions may inadvertently choose the same numbering convention for their sites as well, thus resulting in code duplication. There are currently almost 54,000 entries in LabWorks, and because of this, if location codes are not at minimum 5 characters in length they may have to be changed upon receipt by the laboratory. Location codes may not be more than 24 characters simply because LabWorks will not accept the code. The Location Code field is set for a maximum of 24 characters.

Contact the Laboratory Section if you have questions about Location Code assignment.